



FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY PROGRAM

GRADUATE STUDENT GUIDELINES

2026-2027

DEPARTMENT OF ANATOMY AND NEUROBIOLOGY

DIVISION OF GRADUATE MEDICAL SCIENCES

BOSTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Supplement to Boston University Division of Graduate Medical Sciences Guidebook

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Guide for Masters Degree Candidates

Full-Time Faculty in Forensic Anthropology

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Graduate Student Committee

This committee directs and oversees the Forensic Anthropology Graduate Program within the Department of Anatomy and Neurobiology. Its responsibilities include: admission decisions, policy-making, the establishment of academic requirements, the resolution of disputes and curriculum development. The Committee consists of the Director of the Forensic Anthropology Graduate Program and at least one additional full-time faculty member.

Description of the MS Program

Coursework

The mission of the Forensic Anthropology Program is to provide an in-depth and innovative education to all students that includes a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary and extensive curriculum. We promote professionalism, leadership, and service in our students.

The Program in Forensic Anthropology is committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, access, and justice through our scholarship, teaching, mentorship, and professional service. For the program's full Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice Statement please go to: <https://www.bumc.bu.edu/gms/forensic-anthropology/about/diversity-equity-inclusion-and-justice-statement/>

The program for the MS degree consists of *two calendar years* of fundamental course work, including laboratory-based coursework and at least two semesters of thesis research work and a written thesis. Students may also complete internships, directed studies and/or field school opportunities as part of their graduate education. Candidates are required to complete a minimum of 42 credits at the graduate level and complete a full laboratory/field research project to meet the requirement for graduation.

Successful completion (a grade of B- or higher) is required in all required courses offered by the Forensic Anthropology program in order to be eligible to graduate. If a student receives a grade(s) below a B- in any of the required 1st year courses, they must petition the Graduate Student Committee for permission to register for 2nd year courses and to repeat the course(s) with unsatisfactory grades.

It is not uncommon for students to complete additional course work, internship opportunities, directed studies and/or field schools that will increase their overall number of credits by the time of graduation. All students must note that coursework remains the priority, and all additional activities must be approved by their thesis advisors. **Summer Semesters (Year 1):** Students are expected to conduct their thesis research or complete an approved internship/directed study during the summer months in the 1st year. Any other activities, including extended absences, over the summer must be approved by the student's thesis advisor.

Grades

To receive graduation credit in any course taken as part of the MS program, students must receive a grade of B- or higher. If a grade of C+ or lower (including grades of an "I" after one year) occurs in eight (8) credit hours or more a student will be automatically dismissed from the Program.

When the work of a course is not completed within the semester of registration due to extenuating circumstances, the grade of "J" may be issued at the discretion of the instructor. ***A grade of "J" can only be given if a student is currently passing the course.*** The grade of "J" will be changed to the grade achieved by the student once all course work is completed; however, if the course work is NOT completed within one calendar year, then the "J" grade automatically becomes a permanent grade of "J" (unsatisfactory grade). "J" grades may not be changed after a period of one calendar year from the time the original grade is recorded. Grades of "J" (after one year) and C+ or lower are interpreted as failures.

If a student receives a grade below a B- in a required course, an opportunity to complete a re-test or an additional assignment may be offered at the discretion of the instructor. This is **NOT** guaranteed and will be considered on a case-by-case basis. If a re-test or an additional assignment is offered and the student passes, a final overall grade of no more than a B- will be granted. If the student does not pass the re-test or additional assignment, they will be required to repeat the course the following year. Note that course prerequisites may preclude registering for some additional classes beyond the failed class. If the student successfully completes repeating the course (e.g., achieves a grade of B- or higher), the highest final grade they will receive is a B-.

Grade Scale

The following grading scale will be used in **all** courses in this program:

A	95+	C+	75-79
A-	91-94	C	71-74
B+	87-90	C-	67-70
B	83-86	D	63-66
B-	80-82	F	<62

Requirements for the MS Degree

Sequence of courses:

Year 1

Fall

FA 700	Professional Skills and Thesis Research Development	3 Credits
FA 718	Special Topics in FA: Outdoor Crime Scene Awareness	3 Credits (1/2 stds)
FA 760	Research in Anthropology	2 Credits
FA 790	History, Methods and Theory in Bio Anthropology	3 Credits
FA 806	Advanced Osteology	4 Credits

Spring

FA 705	Forensic Anthropology Techniques	3 Credits
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FA 718	Special Topics in FA: Outdoor Crime Scene Awareness	3 Credits (1/2 stds)
FA 761	Research in Anthropology	2 Credits
FA 804	Experimental Design and Statistics for Forensic Anthropologists	3 Credits
FA 800	Field Methods in Forensic Anthropology	3 Credits
FA 715	Forensic Pathology	2 Credits

Year 2

Summer II

FA 805	Advanced Crime Scene Investigation	2 Credits
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Fall

FA 712	Human Anatomy and Osteology	4 Credits
FA 807	Taphonomy	3 Credits
FA 808	Forensic Trauma Analysis	3 Credits

Spring

FA 760	Research in Anthropology	2 Credits
FA 704	Bioarchaeology	2 Credits
FA 716	Expert Witness Testimony	2 Credits
FA 802	Applied Forensic Anthropology	3 Credits

**Failure to have an approved final version of the thesis proposal (including an established experimental design, identified location, collection, sample, etc. for data collection, and travel plans) in FA 700 by the end of the Fall semester (December) will result in a grade of Incomplete for this course. The student will be required to continue to work on the proposal and to finalize the proposal by February 1st. A finalized proposal will have been reviewed and edited at least twice by the student's research committee, presented by the student in an oral presentation to all FA faculty and the final version approved by the research committee before Feb 1st. If the final version of the thesis proposal is then submitted and approved by Feb 1st, a final grade of no higher than B+ will be given in place of the incomplete grade. If the final proposal is not submitted and/or not approved by the faculty, the student will receive a grade of F in the course and be required to re-take and complete successfully FA 700 in the following Fall semester.*

Full-Time Certification: If a student is taking fewer than 12 credits in any semester, the student is considered to be part-time; however, if a student needs to be classified as full-time, the student will submit a full-time certification form through student link. On the submission form the student must clearly state the specific activities in the semester in addition to courses (for example, "I will be collecting and analyzing the data for my thesis research for 25 hours per week").

You need to be enrolled in the semester you plan to graduate. If you will be graduating in Summer of your 2nd year (called September Graduation), you are required to Register as a Continuing Student for the Summer II semester. If you will be graduating in Fall of your 3rd year (called January Graduation), you are required to Register as a Continuing Student for the Fall semester.

Continuation in Program Beyond Second Year: If a student needs to continue in the program beyond the summer of their second year to complete their thesis, they will be required to petition the Graduate Committee

for permission to register for the Fall semester of their 3rd year. In the petition, the reason for the extension needs to be clearly stated with a detailed schedule for completing their thesis which will be evaluated by the Graduate Committee. Once the petition is approved, the student will register for **two research credits for a grade**. If the student does not complete all program requirements at the end of the Fall semester of their 3rd year, the student will receive a grade of F for their research credits and will be dismissed from the Program.

Prerequisites:

Multiple courses have prerequisites in order to be eligible to enroll in them. In each case, the required previous course must have been passed with a grade of B- or higher and cannot be in an Incomplete status at the final deadline for enrollment for the upcoming course.

FA 705 Forensic Anthropology Techniques

Prerequisite:

FA 806 Advanced Osteology

FA 807 Taphonomy

Prerequisites:

FA 806 Advanced Osteology

FA 802 Applied Forensic Anthropology

Prerequisites:

FA 705 Forensic Anthropology Techniques

FA 807 Taphonomy

FA 808 Forensic Trauma Analysis

FA 806 Advanced Osteology

Criteria for Acceptable Academic Standing

Students in the MS Program in Forensic Anthropology must meet ***all*** of the following criteria each semester in order to maintain acceptable academic standing:

1. Maintain a minimum GPA of 3.50,
2. By February 1st of the 1st year in the program a ***complete thesis proposal must be approved*** by the Faculty.
3. By the end of the Summer II semester (first year), sufficient progress in data collection must have been made by the student and approved by the Chairperson of the student's thesis committee.
4. Successful completion (a grade of B- or higher) is required in all courses offered by the Forensic Anthropology program.

Failure to meet these criteria will result in the student being placed on academic probation and not being eligible to participate in internship opportunities, short courses, peer tutorships and other program-affiliated activities outside of regular course requirements, including presenting at/attending professional meetings and possible suspension of research funding.

Unless otherwise specified, all deficiencies in the criteria listed above must be corrected within one semester of being notified of unacceptable academic standing by the Graduate Student Committee. *Failure to correct the deficiencies within one semester (or timeframe provided by the Graduate Student Committee) will result in dismissal from the program.*

Continuation in Program Beyond Second Year: If a student needs to continue in the program beyond the summer of their second year, they will be required to petition to the Graduate Committee for permission to register for the Fall of their 3rd year. In the petition, the reason for the extension needs to be clearly stated and will be evaluated by Program. If a student does not complete all program requirements at the end of the Fall semester of their 3rd year, the student will be dismissed from the Program.

Thesis and the Research Committee

Research Committee

By the end of the first semester in the graduate program, each student **must** select a Research Committee and have a complete and approved final version of their thesis proposal. Failure to have an approved final version of the thesis proposal (including an established experimental design, identified location, collection, sample, etc. for data collection, and travel plans) by the end of the Fall semester (December) will result in a grade of Incomplete for the Professional Skills course. If the final version of the thesis proposal is then submitted and approved by February 1st a final grade of no higher than B+ will be given in place of the incomplete grade. *If the final thesis proposal is not submitted and approved by Feb 1st, students will be required to take a leave of absence until the following Fall, at which time they will be required to register for and successfully re-take this course.*

Research or work toward the thesis **WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED** without prior approval from the Research Committee. Each student's Research Committee will include two Forensic Anthropology faculty members (full-time, adjunct or affiliated). Each student will choose a Committee Chair who will serve as the first reader and another faculty member who will be the second reader of the thesis. The second or additional readers may be external to BU in special contexts, and students will work with the Committee Chair to identify the appropriate reader(s).

The Research Committee will meet with the student at intervals of not more than one month apart once the student begins working on their research. **These meetings will be initiated and arranged by the student.** The Research Committee will consider the student's research plan, assist in implementing that plan and guide the writing process. The student should note that the two members of the Committee (first and second readers) must sign the finished thesis. Therefore, the student should seriously consider the advice of the Research Committee. **All deadlines for submission of thesis work and the required forms to the registrar's office are the responsibility of the student.** Failure to meet these deadlines may require the student to register as a continuing student for an additional semester in order to complete their thesis. Please see attached Student Checklist for required meetings and actions.

Individual Committee Chairpersons may have additional requirements, including but not limited to completion of chapter drafts at intervals prior to the entire thesis draft being due. These requirements will be conveyed on an individual basis.

Thesis Proposal

All students are required to prepare and submit a thesis proposal in the Professional Skills and Thesis Research Development course (FA700) during the 1st semester.

Thesis Budget: Students must include a detailed budget of expenses for their project in their thesis proposal. All students may be provided a program research budget of no more than of \$1200 to conduct their thesis research.

Expenses beyond this amount will be the responsibility of the student. Budget expenses that will be approved for reimbursement include travel, lodging, museum fees, equipment and supplies. Meals will not be reimbursed.

Thesis Research

All thesis projects are laboratory- (i.e., hands on or virtual data collection), fieldwork- (i.e., experimental data collection), or ethnographic- (i.e., Institutional Review Board approved qualitative and quantitative surveys) based. Library-based theses are generally not acceptable. The body of the thesis document must be **a minimum of 65 double-spaced pages in length (not including figures, tables, and appendices)**. **No individual chapter may be fewer than 5 double-spaced pages in length.** These requirements are also in place for all draft versions i.e., submitting a thesis that does not meet these criteria does not count toward meeting an interim deadline for approval. Information about margins, font size etc. can be found in the *Research Guide for Writers of Theses and Dissertations*, prepared by Boston University's Mugar Memorial Library. The process of conducting research and writing a thesis requires approximately **8-12 months to complete**

The thesis is not a term paper, library book review or a laboratory report. It will not be graded and passed back to you. The thesis is a process of writing and revision. Two faculty members will spend considerable time reading and editing your thesis a minimum of twice and return their editorial comments to you.

Students are expected to incorporate this feedback into a 2nd version of their thesis at a minimum. The committee will again review this version and additional feedback will be provided to the student. A third or higher iteration version of the thesis may be required.

The faculty reviewing your thesis will decide when the thesis is complete.

Please see Appendix, Thesis Timeline, for Due Dates for the drafts of the thesis. **Failure to meet these deadlines will result in the student being required to register as a continuing student and pay the associated tuition fee for an additional semester.** Extensions are **NOT** provided if students do not meet graduate school deadlines. **It is the student's responsibility to obtain the deadlines for graduation for each semester from the registrar's office and to meet these deadlines.** It is highly recommended that the student frequently communicate with the appropriate advisors in regard to plans for the thesis and the proposed graduation date. Note that it is common and, in many cases, the optimal course of action for students to continue the thesis writing process into the second Summer semester during their time in the program.

Progress of a student's research and writing of their thesis will be monitored by their research committee (see Appendix). At regularly scheduled meetings, the chairperson of each committee will document the student's progress and inform the student of their expected graduation date on the Student Thesis Review Form. The committee chairperson and the student at each meeting will sign this form.

As a piece of scientific work, your thesis must include a **clearly stated hypothesis or scientific question** that is being addressed or investigated. The hypothesis or question should be related to laboratory/field experience. Students should be mindful of the significant time commitment involved in a field- or laboratory-based project, availability of instrumentation, supplies, ethics, and chemical/biological standards as well as the availability of an appropriate faculty member(s) for guidance.

All work must be properly cited in an accepted format. In-text citations must include author's last name and year of publication (Gilmore et al., 1995; White & Gilmore, 1993; Scruton, 1996), and numbered citations will not be accepted unless required by a journal. The reference list must include authors, year published, title of article, journal, volume and inclusive pages. References are listed alphabetically by author. The following provides

examples of a suggested format for references:

Gilmore TD, White DW, Sarkar S and Sif S (1995) Malignant transformation of cells by the v-Rel oncoprotein. In *The DNA Provirus: Howard Temin's Scientific Legacy* (Cooper GM, Greenberg-Temin R & Sugden B, eds), American Society for Microbiology, Washington DC, pp. 109-128.

White DW, Roy A and Gilmore TD (1995) The v-Rel oncoprotein blocks apoptosis and proteolysis of I κ B- α in transformed chicken spleen cells. *Oncogene* 10:857-868.

American Journal of Biological Anthropology (AJBA) Format (Chicago Manual of Style [Author-Date] style):

Scruton, R. (1996). The eclipse of listening. *The New Criterion*, 15(3), 5-13.

All statements and facts included in the thesis that are not the student's own conclusions or original data **MUST** be cited properly. The majority of citations **MUST** be from peer-reviewed journal articles. Textbook citations and personal communications should be limited to less than 5% of literature cited. Websites and their documents (other than peer-reviewed journal reprints) are generally unsuitable as reference sources and as such are discouraged. Students must incorporate a minimum of **60 references** into their overall work. The complete set of formal requirements for a thesis available from the Division of Graduate Medical Sciences (*Research Guide for Writers of Theses and Dissertations*, prepared by Boston University's Mugar Memorial Library):

<http://gmsfile.bumc.bu.edu/pdfs/thesisgd.pdf>

Research Grades: Students are required to register for a minimum of 4 research credits during their time in the program. The research grade will be based the criteria listed in the grading rubrics in the Appendix.

Thesis Data

All students must provide a digital copy of the final, complete data that they collected for their thesis research to their thesis chair by the time of graduation.

Defense of Thesis Research

All students are required to provide a 20-minute oral presentation describing their thesis research and results prior to graduation. Prior to the presentation, all students must have the Thesis Presentation Approval Form (see appendix) completed and signed by the research committee. Individual advisors also may require previous review of the slide presentation and a complete rehearsal of the presentation.

The format of this presentation will be similar to the type of presentation that would be given at a professional meeting. Student's presentations will be graded according the program-grading rubric for presentations (Appendix) and will count for 15% of their final research grade. Successful completion of the defense, with a grade of 80% or higher on the presentation, is required to graduate.

In the event that a student does not pass the defense, the student will be provided with **ONE** additional opportunity present their thesis and pass the defense. Failure of the 2nd attempt is considered grounds for dismissal from the program. The Graduate Student Committee, in consultation with the student and the thesis committee Chairperson, will set the date and format of the one re-examination(s), if necessary.

****VERY IMPORTANT:** Please follow information in all emails form GMS Registrar and GMS guidelines for graduation deadlines:

<https://www.bumc.bu.edu/gms/academics/masters-program-research-thesis-capstone-and-dissertation-information/>

International Travel for Research

Students may wish to travel to other universities, museums, or other institutions to collect data for their thesis. Students traveling internationally to collect data for their thesis must follow the policies and guidelines set forth by the Global Operations Program at Boston University. The policies and guidelines can be found at <http://www.bu.edu/globalprograms/global-toolkit/>. Compliance with all of the Global Operation Program policies and guidelines is mandatory.

Publishing and Presentations

Students are strongly encouraged to work with their Chairperson, academic advisor, or professor to submit their thesis research for presentations at professional meetings and for publication. All manuscripts, abstracts, presentations and posters **MUST** be approved by the Chairperson of the student's research committee **prior** to submission to any journal or professional society or association for presentation. All materials will be submitted a minimum of three weeks prior to the deadline for any presentations. Please see Appendix for more details. All authors included on presentations and publications must also approve each submission. These requirements must be met even after the student has graduated from the program. **Failure to do so may result in the program requesting that accepted publications and presentations be withdrawn.**

Internships, Field Schools, and Archaeological Field Work

Although not a requirement for graduation, students may decide to pursue an **approved** internship, field school and/or archaeological field work in a relevant setting. Students will be responsible for identifying their internships or field schools with the assistance of the Graduate Student Committee. With approval from the Graduate Student Committee and the site supervisor, work completed at an internship or field school may be used as data and resources for the student's thesis. Students may receive 2-4 credits for their internship or field school at the discretion of the student's academic advisor, depending on the number of hours completed and the nature of the work completed during the internship or field school. A completed evaluation from the internship or field school supervisor describing the nature of the work completed and the quality of the student's performance is required. In addition, the student will be required to write an 8-10-page summary of their internship or field school experiences and responsibilities. The paper should include evidence of skills or knowledge gained during the internship or field school and the results of any experiments or research conducted. The evaluation (grade) for the internship or field school will be based upon the written paper, which will be graded by the student's program advisor, as well as input from the internship or field school supervisor. **It is the responsibility of the student to make sure the evaluation form and the written paper are turned in to their program advisor in order for a grade to be assigned.** Students who register for an internship or field school and fail to submit the required documents will receive a grade of F.

Requests for Letters of Recommendation

Requests for letters of recommendation for Ph.D. programs, internships, field schools, or employment applications must be requested at **least 4 weeks prior to the due date**. Requests must be made in an email, and the student must provide the address of the school/program, to whom the letter should be addressed and specific details about the program to which the student is applying and any required forms and postage. In addition,

students should send updated copies of their CVs and thesis proposals to the faculty when requesting a letter of recommendation.

Professional Organizations

Students are encouraged to join the American Association of Biological Anthropology (www.bioanth.org) and American Academy of Forensic Sciences (www.aafs.org) as well as other forensic and anthropological professional organizations such as the International Association for Identification (www.theiai.org). Students are responsible for association fees.

Students are encouraged to attend the annual meetings of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS) and the American Association of Biological Anthropologists (AABA) that are held in February (AAFS) and March or April (AABA) each year. However, to complete all necessary courses in the spring semester, the dates of our Spring Break may vary, and therefore classes may be held during the regularly scheduled Spring Break for the Medical School. Students are advised that in all cases, their coursework and thesis take precedence and that meeting attendance does not indicate an automatic acceptable excuse for submitting assignments late or falling behind in their thesis research. Students who are not in good academic standing are not encouraged to attend professional meetings, as your coursework takes total priority.

Any student attending a professional organization meeting or presenting elsewhere while enrolled in the program must remember they are representing Boston University and the Forensic Anthropology Program. Therefore, all rules set forth in the University and Program Guidelines must be followed.

Policy on Academic Honesty

Boston University is committed to the principles of intellectual honesty and integrity. All members of the BU community are expected to maintain complete honesty in all academic work, presenting only that which is their own work in tests and assignments. **This includes working or communicating in any way on classroom and laboratory assignments with other students unless specific permission for this is granted in advance by the instructor.** Violating this policy will result in a failing grade for the assignment or test at issue. If a second violation occurs in association with any course in the Forensic Anthropology Program, the student will face a disciplinary hearing with the Graduate Student Committee, and the Dean of Students will be notified. For complete details, please refer to the Boston University Code of Student Responsibilities. If you have any questions regarding proper attribution of the work of others or additional academic honesty concerns, contact the instructor prior to submitting the work for evaluation.

Classroom Policies

The nature of the material explored in this program is inherently delicate and of a deeply personal nature. While enrolled in this program it is expected that all students will adhere to the Boston University Code of Student Responsibilities. This document can be found at: <http://www.bu.edu/lifebook/university-policies/policies-code.html>. Students are expected to conduct themselves professionally and represent the program professionally. Professional and respectful behavior is required at all times in your communication and interactions with faculty, students and administrators.

Human remains are to be treated with respect and never to be abused or handled in an inappropriate manner. Violation of the appropriate decorum in working with these materials will be considered a serious infraction, resulting in a disciplinary hearing and possible dismissal from the program.

To ensure a quality educational experience for all students and instructors, we ask that students respect fellow students and instructors. To sustain an organized and meaningful learning environment you should make every effort to arrive on time for your classes, turn off cell phones/PDAs and provide your full attention to your instructors and fellow students. Students may **NOT** send or receive text messages or email during class time. If an urgent situation does arise during class, please step out into the hallway to communicate.

Laboratory Safety Training

All students are required to complete a mandatory Laboratory Safety Training session during Orientation and during August of the 2nd year. This training is required prior to being allowed access to any of our laboratories and outdoor facility.

The forensic anthropology laboratories are unlike the classrooms. Upon entering these or any laboratory your first concern is safety. Proper Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) is required by the University, the City of Boston, the State of Massachusetts and the Federal Government. If you are unsure of the requirements, they are posted at the door of each laboratory. The basic requirements are always safety glasses, gloves and a laboratory coat. Shorts and open toe shoes are strictly prohibited. If you need them, scrubs and disposable lab coats are available. You should keep a pair of shoes for laboratory use in your locker. A BU Laboratory Safety Officer can shut down an entire laboratory for any violations. If you are seeking assistance from another student, a faculty member outside of our program, etc., that requires them to enter our laboratory space, you must obtain prior approval from your advisor and you are responsible for that person adhering to all safety rules in our laboratories.

If you are using any specialized equipment, chemicals, etc. please see a faculty member to assist you and/or direct you to specific training before starting your project. If you have any questions regarding laboratory safety, direct them to a faculty member immediately.

All consumption of food or any food not in sealed containers in any of the forensic anthropology laboratory spaces is strictly prohibited. Beverages may be consumed from spill-proof containers. No food waste is to be disposed of in any of the laboratory spaces.

Penalties: Violations of any of these rules will result in an immediate suspension of your access to the laboratories and the Holliston Outdoor Research Facility (ORF). These suspensions can delay your research and graduation date. Any financial implications to your research as a result of a suspension will be at your cost. The program will not pay for any expenses resulting from delays due to suspensions. If suspended, you will be required to work with the faculty to reinstate your use of the laboratories and ORF.

Outdoor Research Facility (ORF)

The program in forensic anthropology operates an off-site outdoor research at the ORF in Holliston, MA that is available for use by students to conduct research projects with nonhuman remains to gather data for their theses. The facility consists of 34 acres of land that includes wooded areas, former cranberry bogs, and open areas. The number of research projects that can be conducted at the facility is high but limited, so students interested in conducting research projects at the facility must submit a written proposal to the graduate student committee that clearly and thoroughly describes the hypothesis, rationale and methods for the project. The use of all material at the facility (e.g., soft tissue, bones and fresh carcasses) must be approved by the faculty prior to the beginning of all research projects. The graduate student committee will review all submitted proposals and decide which will be approved. This is a research facility, and while you are permitted to be there during your studies, you may **NOT** bring family, or friends to survey the property without a request to do so and subsequent permission. Violation of this rule will constitute a serious breach of trust and will be dealt with appropriately.

Note that the working spaces at the ORF are to be kept clean and orderly at all times, and shelf spaces are available for the storage of student research materials upon request.

Prior to using the ORF, each student must read the rules and guidelines governing the use of the facility. Each student must sign and acknowledge the rules and guidelines sheet. Any non-program student attending the facility may only do so with prior faculty approval and they must sign a release form as required by the University.

All of the safety rules listed above also apply to the ORF. No open toe shoes or shorts are allowed at the facility. We realize it can get very hot and humid in the summer months at Holliston, but there are no exceptions. If you need to, you can bring a pair of scrubs with you from the medical campus. A significant concern at the ORF are ticks. There is a large deer population on the property, and they are carriers. Make use of the insect repellent located in the kitchen of the house. Poison ivy is also frequently encountered there.

When working at the ORF on your research at the outdoor facility or classes in the house make certain you clean up at the end of each day, as there are no custodial services. If you use tools or equipment, you must make certain you clean them and return these items to their proper storage area. There is a large dumpster in the parking lot outside the kennel building to be used for disposal of trash. Trash containers will be emptied each day.

Note that failure to respect the rules of basic of safety and cleanliness at the ORF or any laboratory space will result in the suspension of the student's right to use these spaces and may result in significant delays or even cancellation of research being conducted there. All equipment and research materials will be stowed and or disposed of, as is appropriate, by the student at the completion of their research and is a requirement for graduation.

When it is required for students to travel to the facility for course-related activities, costs for travel between the medical school campus and the facility may be reimbursed to the student with prior faculty approval. The total mileage may not exceed 53 miles per round trip and students will be reimbursed under the current government travel mileage rate. The use of Zip Cars or Ride Share also requires prior faculty approval. Once approved by a faculty member the student will be required to open a personal account and will be reimbursed after submitting the appropriate receipt.

Photography

Casual personal photography of activities, materials, classes, class material and above all decomposing remains of any sort is strictly forbidden. Research photography and videography IS permitted in the context of research and thesis purposes. Unauthorized imagery of any research activity or the facilities is viewed dimly and may carry disciplinary consequences, including dismissal from the university, pending investigation by the Program faculty.

Students are strictly forbidden from publishing any materials related to the program on the internet in any fashion without explicit written consent of the program faculty. This includes specifically, but is not limited to, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, Bluesky, and other social networking sites and personal web sites.

Students are expected to display maturity in their conversations about programmatic activities. Most people are uncomfortable with the idea of death and decomposition. Be mindful of your location when such conversations arise. Do NOT display osteological materials casually in public, especially when transporting materials to and from the ORF and in the hallways and elevators in the educational facility.

Background Checks

While not required for entry into the graduate program, students should be aware that employment in a crime laboratory (government or private) or law enforcement agency typically requires successful completion of an extensive personal background check which may include a criminal history investigation, fingerprint check, polygraph examination and drug testing.

Policy on the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Coursework, Thesis Preparation and Writing, and Assignments

Purpose: The Boston University Forensic Anthropology Program is committed to developing students' scientific reasoning, analytical skills, ethical judgment, and professional communication. These competencies are essential for careers in forensic anthropology, medicolegal investigation, bioarchaeology, and related disciplines. While artificial intelligence (AI) tools are increasingly used in research and professional practice, students must demonstrate their own mastery of course material and maintain the highest standards of academic integrity.

General Policy: Unless explicitly authorized by the course instructor, students are expected to complete all assignments independently and without the assistance of AI. The submission of work generated wholly or partially by AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Copilot, or similar technologies) as one's own work constitutes academic misconduct.

Students are responsible for ensuring that all submitted work accurately reflects their own understanding, analysis, interpretation, and writing.

Suspected unauthorized AI use will be reviewed by the Forensic Anthropology Graduate Student Committee and referred to the School's academic conduct process.

Acceptable Uses of AI: When permitted by the instructor, AI tools may be used for limited support purposes, including:

- Brainstorming research topics or questions.
- Improving grammar and spelling after the student has written the original work.
- Assisting with formatting citations (which students must verify for accuracy).
- Providing explanations of general scientific concepts for personal learning purposes.
- Find relevant references for course assignments or theses.

Any permitted AI use must not replace the student's original analysis, interpretation, or conclusions.

Unacceptable Uses of AI: Unless specifically authorized, students may **not** use AI to:

- Write or substantially rewrite any portion of their thesis, assignments, papers, laboratory reports, discussion posts, theses, or presentations (program and professional).
- Generate literature reviews or research summaries that are submitted for credit.
- Analyze skeletal remains, trauma patterns, taphonomic evidence, or any other forensic case material.
- Produce interpretations of osteological data or forensic findings.
- Generate laboratory observations, measurements, or data.
- Complete quizzes, examinations, or practical assessments.

- Fabricate references, citations, case studies, or research findings.
- Fabricate data for course assignments or theses.
- Paraphrase published work to evade plagiarism detection.

AI Disclosure Requirement: If AI use is specifically permitted by an instructor for a particular assignment, students must disclose its use by including a statement describing:

- The AI tool used.
- The purpose for which it was used.
- The extent to which AI contributed to the final submission.

Example:

"ChatGPT (OpenAI) was used to review grammar and spelling. All scientific analysis, interpretations, and conclusions are my own."

Failure to disclose permitted AI use may constitute academic misconduct.

Appendix

Program Thesis Research Timeline

MAY GRADUATION:

December 1 st :	Meet with Research Committee. Must submit 1 st FULL draft of thesis (All Sections)
January 15 th :	Receive feedback from all readers and you will be notified by committee if you are eligible for May Graduation date.
February 15 th :	Second version of thesis with committee edits and comments incorporated. If this version of your thesis is not submitted at this time, your Graduation date will be forwarded to September. Decision of the Research Committee is final.
March 15 th :	Receive feedback from all readers
March 25 th :	FINAL THESIS DUE

SEPTEMBER GRADUATION:

April 1 st :	Meet with Research Committee. Must submit 1 st FULL draft of thesis (All Sections)
May 15 th :	Receive feedback from all readers and you will be notified by committee if you are eligible for September Graduation date.
June 15 th :	Second version of thesis with committee edits and comments incorporated. If this version of your thesis is not submitted at this time, your Graduation date will be forwarded to September. Decision of the Research Committee is final.
July 15 th :	Receive feedback from all readers
July 25 th :	FINAL DRAFT OF THESIS DUE

DECEMBER GRADUATION:

Aug 1 st :	Meet with Research Committee. Must submit 1 st FULL draft of thesis (All Sections).
Sept 15 th :	Receive feedback from all readers and you will be notified by committee if you are eligible for December Graduation date.
Oct 15 th :	Second version of thesis with committee edits and comments incorporated. If this version of your thesis is not submitted at this time, your Graduation date will be forwarded to September. Decision of the Research Committee is final.
Nov 15 th :	Receive feedback from all readers
Nov 25 th :	FINAL DRAFT OF THESIS DUE

Grading Rubric for Thesis Program in Forensic Anthropology

Student: _____

Grader: _____

The Unsatisfactory Paper (Below B-): Minimal lack of effort or comprehension of the assignment. Very difficult to understand owing to major problems with mechanics, structure, and analysis or has no identifiable thesis.

Criteria	A/A-	B+/B	B-
Thesis/ Hypothesis	Easily identifiable, plausible, novel, sophisticated, and insightful	Promising, but slightly unclear, or lacking in insight or originality.	Unclear (contain many vague terms), appears unoriginal, or offers relatively little that is new.
Structure	Evident, understandable, appropriate for thesis. Excellent transitions from point to point. Paragraphs support solid topic sentences	Generally clear and appropriate, though wanders occasionally. Has a few unclear transitions, or a few paragraphs without strong topic sentences.	Generally unclear, often wanders or jumps around. Few or weak transitions, many paragraphs without topic sentences.
Use of evidence/ literature	Primary source information used to buttress every point with at least one example. Examples support thesis and fit within paragraph. Excellent integration of quoted material into sentences.	Examples used to support most points. Some evidence does not support point, or may appear where inappropriate or lacking. Quotes well integrated into sentences.	Examples used to support some points. Points often lack supporting evidence, or inappropriate evidence. Quotes are poorly integrated into sentences.
Analysis	Appropriate analysis conducted with data and results described appropriately. Results discussed in conclusion and related to literature.	Acceptable analysis conducted though somewhat superficial. Results described but somewhat unclear. Relationship of findings to literature addressed but superficial	Basic or inappropriate analysis. No clear description of results and not adequately related to literature.
Logic	All ideas in the paper flow logically; the argument is identifiable, reasonable, and sound. Author acknowledges counter-arguments; makes novel connections to literature that demonstrate relevance of thesis.	Argument of paper is clear, usually flows logically and makes sense. Some evidence that counter-arguments acknowledged, though perhaps not addressed. Occasional insightful connections literature made.	Logic often fails, or argument may often be unclear. Does not address counter-arguments or make any connections with the literature.
Feedback Incorporation (if applicable)	Student incorporated previous feedback and solved problems discussed.	Student made some attempt but left significant gaps.	Student did not fix large problems indicated previously and our in need of immediate attention.
Grammar & Language	Sentence structure, grammar, and diction excellent; correct use of punctuation and citation style; no spelling errors; no run-on sentences or comma splices.	Sentence structure, grammar, and diction strong despite occasional lapses; punctuation and citation style often used correctly. Some (minor) spelling errors; may have a few run-on sentence or comma splice.	Significant problems in sentence structure, grammar, and diction. Frequent major errors in citation style, punctuation, and spelling. Many run-on sentences and comma splices.

GRADING CRITERIA FOR RESEARCH CREDITS

All students are required to register for a minimum of 2 and up to 6 research credits during their time in the MS program in Forensic Anthropology, normally during the summer between Year 1 and Year 2. A primary goal of the Program is to train students in appropriate and effective research behaviors that produce data and provide the basis for writing your thesis. When registered for research credits, students will be graded on their performance in research design, data collection, data analysis and the final write-up their thesis.

As part of your responsibility for your research grade, students need to demonstrate responsibility for their work, frequent and effective communication with your thesis committee, appropriate data collection and analysis, and incorporation of the ideas, comments and editorial comments from your committee into the final draft of your thesis. The grading for research credits is not an automatic A. Your research committee will review your work with you each semester and evaluate your thesis proposal and the final draft of your thesis. Your committee will assign you a final grade upon submission of the final draft of your thesis. Your final grade will be for your thesis proposal, data collection, data analysis, thesis presentation, and final draft of your thesis. Grading will be based on the following criteria:

1. Thesis Proposal (15%)

- a. Valid and significant research question.
- b. Clear and concise statement of hypothesis.
- c. Reasonable and realistic research plan.
- d. Preparation and final follow-through of IRB or IACUC application (if applicable).

2. Communication with Committee (10%)

- a. Timeliness and frequency of communications (it is recommended that students update their committee either in person or by e-mail bi-weekly and meet with their committee at least twice a semester)
- b. Responsiveness to suggestions (e.g., are suggestions and comments incorporated into projects and text of thesis)
- c. Effectiveness in the ability to articulate the project and its progress.

3. Familiarity with Relevant Literature (10%)

- a. Knowledge of references that are central to research project.
- b. Depth of knowledge of the literature, including those drawn from branches of science other than forensic anthropology.
- c. Incorporation of relevant comparisons between one's own findings and those of other researchers

4. Research Conduct (10%)

- a. Appropriate regard for regulations as a representative of Boston University.
- b. Proper and careful handling of materials.
- c. Follow-through with introductions and research offers from other institutions, including approval by them of any type of research proposal deemed by them to be necessary to obtain their permissions and access to materials.
- d. Appropriate use of time.
- e. Collection of a sample size sufficient to test the proposed hypothesis.
- f. If needed, adjustments in plan made with consent of research committee.

5. Thesis Presentation (15%)

- a. Effectiveness of communication skills (e.g. no use of slang, discusses project rather than reading directly from slides, highlights of project on slides and not copious amounts of text).
- b. Practiced presentation with faculty prior to defense.
- c. Completed within 20-minute time limit.
- d. Ability to answer questions.

6. Final Draft of Thesis (40%)

- a. Consistent meeting of deadlines with complete versions that are not in need of basic editorial review prior to their submission to the research committee (i.e., if a draft is deemed “rough” or incomplete, including the minimum page limits for any chapter, it is in no way ready nor acceptable for submission at any stage of the thesis review process).
- b. Incorporation of suggestions, editorial comments, and critiques from research committee.
- c. Discussion of results and the relationship of the results to the known literature (not simply a restatement of results).
- d. Ideas for logical next steps in future research based on findings.
- e. Discussion of the relevance of the results to the field.
- f. Overall ability for written expression, including basic grammar, clarity of expression, ability to build logical arguments, conformity to standards of science writing, use of appropriate tables and graphics, and consistency in formatting.



Grading Rubric for Oral Presentations Program in Forensic Anthropology

Criteria	Excellent (5 points)	Very Good (3 points)	Good/Poor (1 point)
Preparation	Exceptional effort into the preparation and design.	Very good preparation and design.	Minimal preparation. Work appears to have been completed at the last minute or no plan in place
Visual Aids	Slides were very well done and added greatly to the presentation.	Slides were clear and helpful.	Slides were very wordy or incomplete and were not particularly helpful.
Organization	Presentation was logical and very well organized.	Presentation had a clear introduction, body and conclusion but needs to more organized.	Presentation was poorly organized and lacked clarity.
Articulation	Excellent and clear verbal articulation of all points.	Explained ideas well.	Ideas were stated, but lacked clarity.
Expertise	Hypothesis and purpose of study were very well presented and supported by several sources. Excellent knowledge of topic was demonstrated.	Hypothesis and purpose of study were presented clearly and supported by a few sources. Good knowledge of topic.	Hypothesis and purpose of study unclear and lacked references. Average/below average knowledge of topic
Grammar and language use	Proper grammar and English was used on slides and in speech throughout presentation. No use of slang.	Proper grammar and English was used on slides and in speech through most of presentation. No or minimal use of slang.	Numerous incorrect uses of grammar and English occurred on slides and/or in speech. Slang was used on occasion or frequently during presentation
Time Management	Presentation was finished within allotted time.	Presentation went under/over time limit by 1-3 minutes	Presentation was under/over time limit by more than 3 minutes.
Feedback Incorporation (if applicable)	Presenter incorporated previous feedback and solved problems discussed.	Presenter made some attempt but left significant gaps.	Presenter did not fix large problems indicated previously and our in need of immediate attention.
Overall Quality	Overall outstanding quality. A powerful and memorable presentation.	Covered all the main points and it was generally well delivered.	Needed more effort in preparation of the presentation to increase overall quality.
Attire/ Professionalism	Presenter was appropriately dressed and maintained excellent professionalism.	Dress was acceptable, and adequate professionalism.	Dress and behavior needs to be more professional.

Student Thesis Progress Form

1st Year

	Student Initials	Advisor Initials
Meet with Faculty in Professional Skills Class	_____	_____
Thesis Topic Approved by December 1	_____	_____
Complete choosing a Research Committee by February	_____	_____
Finalize all schedules, equipment, travel, and permissions for thesis (March 1)	_____	_____
Meet with Graduate Student Committee (May)	_____	_____
Meet with Research Committee (June)	_____	_____
Meet with Research Committee (August)	_____	_____

2nd Year

IF GRADUATING IN MAY:

Submission of 1st Version of Thesis:

Meet with Research Committee and Submit 1st Version of Thesis (Dec 1st) _____

Decision of Committee on Graduation Date (Date: _____) _____

Student Signature: _____

Signature of 1st Reader: _____

Signature of 2nd Reader: _____

Feedback Received from 1st and 2nd Readers (by Jan 15th) _____

Submit Thesis Title Approval Form to Registrar _____

Submit Diploma Application Form to Registrar _____

Submission of 2nd Version of Thesis:

Meet with Research Committee and Submit 2nd Version of Thesis (Feb 15th) _____

Decision of Committee on Graduation Date (Date: _____) _____

Student Signature: _____

Signature of 1st Reader: _____

Signature of 2nd Reader: _____

Feedback Received from 1st and 2nd Readers (by Mar 15th) _____

Oral Presentation of Thesis Research (Date Set by Committee) _____

FINAL DRAFT OF THESIS DUE: March 25th

IF GRADUATING IN SEPTEMBER:

Submission of 1st Version of Thesis:

Meet with Research Committee and Submit 1st Version of Thesis (April 1st) _____

Decision of Committee on Graduation Date (Date: _____) _____

Student Signature: _____

Signature of 1st Reader: _____

Signature of 2nd Reader: _____

Feedback Received from 1st and 2nd Readers (by May 15th) _____

Submit Thesis Title Approval Form to Registrar _____

Submit Diploma Application Form to Registrar _____

Submission of 2nd Version of Thesis:

Meet with Research Committee and Submit 2nd Version of Thesis (June 15th) _____

Decision of Committee on Graduation Date (Date: _____) _____

Student Signature: _____

Signature of 1st Reader: _____

Signature of 2nd Reader: _____

Feedback Received from 1st and 2nd Readers (by July 15) _____

Oral Presentation of Thesis Research (Date Set by Committee) _____

FINAL DRAFT OF THESIS DUE: **July 25th**

IF GRADUATING IN DECEMBER:

Submission of 1st Version of Thesis:

Meet with Research Committee and Submit 1st Version of Thesis (Aug 1st) _____

Decision of Committee on Graduation Date (Date: _____) _____

Student Signature: _____

Signature of 1st Reader: _____

Signature of 2nd Reader: _____

Feedback Received from 1st and 2nd Readers (by Sept 15th) _____

Submit Thesis Title Approval Form to Registrar _____

Submit Diploma Application Form to Registrar _____

Submission of 2nd Version of Thesis:

Meet with Research Committee and Submit 2nd Version of Thesis (Oct 15th) _____

Decision of Committee on Graduation Date (Date: _____) _____

Student Signature: _____

Signature of 1st Reader: _____

Signature of 2nd Reader: _____

Feedback Received from 1st and 2nd Readers (by Nov 15th) _____

Oral Presentation of Thesis Research (Date Set by Committee) _____

FINAL DRAFT OF THESIS DUE: **Nov 25th**



BOSTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE PROGRAM IN FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY

Thesis Presentation Approval Form

The following form must be completed and signed off by each of the student's readers before the student's presentation can be scheduled.

Student Name: _____
Student ID #: _____
Presentation Title: _____

Faculty Approval:

1st Reader:
Name: _____
Title: _____
Signature: _____
Zoom (if not attending): _____

2nd Reader:
Name: _____
Title: _____
Signature: _____
Zoom (if not attending): _____

3rd Reader:
Name: _____
Title: _____
Signature: _____
Zoom (if not attending): _____

(Faculty Use Only) Date Scheduled: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____

PUBLISHING AND PRESENTATION GUIDELINE CERTIFICATION

Submission of thesis data or other data collected while a student in the Program in Forensic Anthropology at Boston University School of Medicine for publication **must** be approved by the chairperson of your thesis committee. The chairperson will approve the idea of preparing a manuscript and will be provided with ample opportunities to edit the manuscript. Authorship on the manuscript will be decided under the advisement of the chairperson of thesis committee. Final submission of the manuscript will be at the discretion of the chairperson of thesis committee. All students must provide a copy of their thesis data to their thesis chair prior to graduation.

Submission of thesis data or other data collected while a student in the Program in Forensic Anthropology at Boston University School of Medicine as an abstract for a poster presentation or oral presentation **must** be approved by the chairperson of your thesis committee. The abstract, poster and/or power point presentation must be submitted to by the chairperson of your thesis committee to be reviewed and edited at a **minimum of 3 weeks prior to presentation**. Authorship on the abstract and poster or presentation will be under the advisement of the chairperson of thesis committee. Final submission of the abstract, poster and/or power point presentation will be at the discretion of the chairperson of thesis committee. ***The paper can be withdrawn from the conference by the committee if these requirements are not met.***

By signing below in the space indicated I certify that I have read this document fully and am aware of my responsibilities regarding the submission and preparation of manuscript, abstracts, poster and oral presentations. Furthermore, by signing I am indicating my agreement with the content of this document.

Student Printed Name

Student Signature

Date

STUDENT GUIDELINE CERTIFICATION

By signing below in the space indicated I certify that I have read this document fully and am aware of my responsibilities regarding the proper timing and conditions of the requirements for graduation from this program. Furthermore, by signing I am indicating my agreement with the content of this document.

Student Printed Name

Student Signature

Date

Faculty Printed Name

Faculty Signature

Date



BOSTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE PROGRAM IN FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY

Emergency Contact Information

Local Emergency Contact

Other Emergency Contact

Alternate Email address:
